

CHAPTER 8

YOG WITH THE IMPERISHABLE GOD

At the end of Chapter 7, Krishn said that yogi who do pious deeds are released from all sin and know the all-pervading God. So action is something that brings knowledge of the Supreme Spirit. They who do it know him (Krishn) along with the omnipresent God-the adhidaiv, adhibhoot, adhiyagya, perfect action and Adhyatma¹. So action is that which appraises us of them. Men who know them are aware, at the end, of Krishn alone, and this knowledge is never blotted out.

Repeating Krishn's own words Arjun raises a question :

1. **“Arjun said, Enlighten me, O Supreme Being, on the nature of Brahm, adhyatm, action, adhibhoot and adhidaiv.”**

The words adhyatm, action, adhibhoot and adhidaiv are all mysteries to Arjun and he wishes to be enlightened on them.

2. **“Who is adhiyagya, O Madhusudan, and how is he enshrined in the body : and how does the man with a restrained mind know you at the end?”**

Who is a adhiyagya and how is he within the body? It is evident that the doer of yagya is some Soul who is based in a human body.

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते॥१॥
अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः॥२॥

1. See verses 29-30 and their exposition in Chapter 7.

And, at last, how does a man with a fully controlled mind know Krishn at the end? So there are seven questions in all and Krishn proceeds to answer them in that order.

- 3. “The Lord said, ‘The one who is imperishable is the Supreme Spirit (Brahm); abiding in a body he is adhyatm; and the cessation of properties in beings which produce something or the other is action.’”**

The one who is indestructible, who never dies, is the Supreme Spirit. Steady devotion to the Self-dominance of the Soul-is adhyatm. Before this stage everyone is ruled by maya, but when a man dwells firmly in God and so in his own Self, he is infused with the sense of supremacy of his Self. This is the culmination of adhyatm. The ceasing-the discontinuance-of the will of beings which results in the creation of both good and evil is, on the other hand, the crowning point of action. This is the perfect action which Krishn had spoken of earlier as known to yogi. Action is now complete and henceforth there is no further need of it. Action is perfected when the desires of beings which create sanskar that are propitious as well as unpropitious are stilled. Beyond this there is not further need of action. So true action is that which brings an end to desires. Such action, therefore, means worship and contemplation that are inherent in yagya.

- 3. “Adhibhoot is all that is subject to birth and death; the Supreme Spirit is adhidaiv, and O the unparalleled among men (Arjun), I (Vasudev) am the adhiyagya in the body.”**

Until the state of immortality is achieved, all the transient destructible desires are adhibhoot or in other words spheres of beings. They are the source of the origin of beings. And the Supreme Spirit who is beyond nature is adhidaiv, the creator of all gods, that is righteous impulses- the divine treasure that is finally dissolved in him. Vasudev-Krishn-is adhiyagya in the human body, the

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः॥३॥

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम्।

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभूतां वर॥४॥

performer of all yagya. Thus God himself, dwelling as the unmanifest Soul in the body, is adhiyagya. Krishn was a yogi, the enjoyer of all oblations. And all yagya are at last absorbed in him. That is the moment of realization of the Supreme Soul. Six of Arjun's questions have now been answered. At last, Krishn takes up the question of how he is known at the end and never forgotten thereafter.

5. "The man who departs from the body remembering me doubtlessly attains to me."

That accounts for Krishn's assertion that the man who finally, that is when he has perfect control over his mind and when even this mind is dissolved, severs his relationship with the body and departs from it with remembrance of him, surely achieves total oneness with him

Death of the body is not the final end, for the succession of bodies continues even after death. It is only when the last crust of earned merits or demerits (sanskar) has disintegrated, and so also the restrained mind along with it, that the final end comes, and after that the Soul does not have to assume a new body. But this is a process of action and it cannot be rendered comprehensible by just words. As long as the transfer from one body to another, like a change of clothes, persists, there is no real end of the physical person. But even while the body is yet alive, with control of the mind and dissolution of the restrained mind itself, physical relationship are sundered. If this state were possible after the event of death, even Krishn could not be perfect. He has said that only by worship carried on through innumerable births does a sage gain identity with him. There is then not even the least distance between them. But his achievement is made during a physical life. When the Soul does not have to assume a new body that is the real end of the physical body.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥५॥

This is a portrayal of real death after which there is no rebirth. At the other end there is physical death which the word accepts as death, but after which the Soul has to be born again. Krishn now dwells upon this :

6. “A man attains, O son of Kunti, to the slate with the thought of which he departs from the body because of his constant preoccupation with that state.”

A man achieves what he bears in mind at the time of his death. How very easy, we may be led to assume? All that we have to do is just remember God before dying after a lifelong indulgence in pleasures. According to Krishn, however, it is not like this at all. At the moment of his death a man can remember only that which he has thought of all his life. So what is needed is lifelong contemplation. In the absence of this, there is no remembrance at the moment of death of the ideal state which has to be achieved.

7. “So you will doubtless realize me if, with your mind and intellect dedicated to me, you always wage war.”

How are uninterrupted meditation and combat accomplished simultaneously? It is perhaps the practice of warriors : one goes on shooting arrows while at the same time intoning and yelling names of deities. But the true meaning of remembrance (internal recitation of the name) is something else and it is clarified by the Yogeshwar in the following verse.

8. “Possessed of the yog of meditation and a restrained mind, O Parth, the man who is always absorbed in my thought attains to the sublime radiance of God.’

Contemplation of God and practise of yog have an identical meaning. The remembrance, which Krishn has spoken of, requires

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥६॥
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मा मे वैष्यस्य संशयम् ॥७॥
अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥८॥

the worshipper to be possessed of yog and a mind so well subdued that it never strays from God. If these conditions are met and the worshipper then remembers constantly, he attains to the magnificence of God. If the thought of other objects comes to mind, one's remembrance is still imperfect. Now, when, it is so subtle that it has no room for any other thought except God and does not countenance any other urges, how can it be possible along with the act of waging war? What kind of war is it? When the mind is pulled back from all sides and centered on the object of worship, prompted by natural properties, feelings of attachment and anger, of love and hatred appear as impediments in the way. We try to remember and concentrate, but these feelings agitate the mind and do their utmost to force it away from the desired memory. Overcoming these external impulses is fighting a war; and they can be destroyed only by continuous meditation. This is the war that the Geeta portrays. the problem then broached is of the object of meditation and Krishn speaks of it.

9. **“The man who remembers God who is omniscient, without beginning and end, dwelling in the Soul that rules all beings the most subtle of the subtle, unmanifest, provider to all, beyond thought, imbued with the light of consciousness, and quite beyond ignorance...”**

God is beyond thought and inconceivable. So long as the mind exists, it urges survive and he is not seen. He is known only after the perfectly restrained mind is itself dissolved. In the seventh verse Krishn spoke of the worshipper's contemplation of him and now he speaks of the contemplation of God. So the instrument of meditation is some accomplished Soul who is imbued with the awareness of reality.

10. **“With unwavering concentration, with his life-breath firmly centered between his brows by the strength of his yog, such a man attains to the effulgent Supreme Being.”**

कविं पुराणमनुसितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥९॥

याणकाले मनसाचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥१०॥

The worshipper who always meditates on God with a steady mind realizes his magnificence when his mind is dissolved by the strength of his yog- by the strength from undertaking of the ordained action- which enables him to centre the breath between the two brows so that there is neither inner agitation nor the advent of any will from an external source. In brief, the realization comes in the state in which all properties, sattwa, rajas and tamas, are perfectly quiet, the vision of mind remains ready on the self and it is achieved by the worshipper who always keeps it in mind that yog is the appointed way of realization. This way is yog, which Krishn has delineated at length in Chapters 5 and 6. He has just told Arjun, “Always remember me.” As we have seen, this is done by resting firmly on the precepts of yog. One who achieves this knows the magnificence of God and becomes one with him, and thereafter his memory is never obliterated from his mind. At this point the question of how God is perceived at the time of departing from the body is resolved. Let us now see the supreme condition that should be the worshipper’s goal and to which the discourse on the Geeta reverts again and again.

11. “I shall tell you briefly of the ultimate state which knowers of the Ved call the imperishable, and which is realized by men who aspire for it, act without desire, and practise continence.”

As was observed in the exposition of the fourteenth verse of Chapter 6, continence is uninterrupted concentration on God through a rejection of all external associations from the mind rather than a mere curbing of the sexual urge. Constant meditation is true continence, for it is this that brings about perception of God and the final absolution. Such an exercise is the restraint of not one sense, but of all senses. Men who can do this are true celibates. What Krishn is going to tell Arjun about this discipline is therefore something that is fit to be cherished by all hearts.

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥११॥

- 12. “Shutting the doors of all the sense, that is restraining them from desire for their objects, confining his intellect within the Self, fixing his life-breath within his mind, and absorbed in yog,... ”**

The necessity of renunciation of desire by a perfect control of the senses is repeatedly stressed. The mind has to be confined within the Self, not outside. With the mind so regulating the breath that it is centered between the two eyebrows and, of course, engaged in the practice of yog, for this is an essential prerequisite;-

- 13. “He who departs from the body intoning OM, which is God in word, and remembering me, attains to salvation. ”**

The sage who dies with the knowledge that the imperishable God is the one reality achieves the state of sublime bliss. Krishn is a yogi, a seer who has achieved awareness of the ultimate truth. As a realized sage, an accomplished teacher, he exhorts Arjun to recite OM, symbol of God, and contemplate him. All great. Souls are known by the name of the entity to which they attain and into which they are finally assimilated. It is for this reason that Krishn prompts Arjun to utter the name of God but remember his own (Krishn's) form. Let us note that he does not tell Arjun to recite his name. With the passage of time, though, Krishn was deified and men began to recite his name; and they are rewarded but only according to the nature of their dedication. Krishn has told Arjun that it is he who both strengthens the devotion of such worshippers and determines their rewards. But these rewards are destroyed along with their recipients.

It is useful to remember how Lord Shiv, the initiator of yog, insisted on the recitation of the syllable “Ram” that signifies the omnipresent God who can be experienced only as an inner voice.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।

मूर्ध्न्याध्यायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥१२॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥१३॥

Sant Kabir is also said to have committed himself to the constant recitation of the two sounds represented by “ra” and “m”. And Krishn here advocates the usefulness of OM. God is known by innumerable names, but only that name which prompts and confirms faith in the one God is worthy of constant remembrance and recitation. Worshippers are rightly cautioned by Krishn that the name they recite time and again must not be one that might incline or encourage them to believe in a multiplicity of gods and goddesses who are nothing more than a bundle of myth. OM is unique in the sense that it literally betokens that the supreme authority of God inheres in every “me”. So seekers must desist from wandering here and there to find him outside themselves.

The revered Maharaj Ji would often advise his devotees to keep in mind his form while intoning some name like OM, Ram or Shiv to visualize him and, with him before the mind’s eye, to remember the identical god-the object of their worship. It is an accomplished teacher who is kept in view while meditating. Whether we hold on to a Ram, Krishn, or a hermit who is liberated from all desire and pleasure of the sense, or to any other being according to our inclination, we can know them only by actual experience, after which they disclose to us the way to some contemporary and accomplished teacher whose guidance we should slowly but surely follow to conquer the material world. At the beginning, I too used to contemplate a huge image of Krishn, but this image was gradually erased from my mind by the advent of perception of my enlightened teacher.

Novices utter the deity’s name, but hesitate to do so while calling a sage in human form. They are unable to discard the bias of their inherited beliefs. So they call to mind some other false god instead. But this practice is, as we have seen, forbidden by Yogeshwar Krishn as impious. The proper way is to find refuge in some realized sage, an accomplished or enlightened teacher, who has already gone through the experience. Fallacious dogmas are then destroyed and the worshipper is enabled to set upon real action as his pious impulses and the capacity to act according to them are rendered sufficiently strong. So, according to Krishn, the mind is restrained and ultimately dissolved by a simultaneous recitation

of OM and remembrance of his form. This is the point at which the accumulated layers of sanskar-of the merits of action-are dissolved and all the relationships of the body severed forever. A man is not rid of the body by just physical death.

- 14. “The yogi who is firmly devoted to me, and who constantly remembers me and is absorbed in me, realizes me with ease.”**

Krishn is easily attained to by the worshipper who has no one except him in his mind, and who thinks steadily only of him and always remembers him. The profit of this attainment is portrayed in the next verse.

- 15. “Accomplished sages who have attained to the ultimate state are no longer subject to transient rebirth which is like a house of sorrows.”**

It is only after attaining to the Supreme Spirit that man is not born again. Krishn then speaks of the sphere of rebirth.

- 16. “All the worlds from Brahmlok downwards are, O Arjun, of a recurrent character, but, O son of Kunti, the soul which realizes me is not born again.”**

The conception of different worlds (lok) in sacred books is an exercise in the creation of metaphor. There is no dark pit in the nether world in which we are stung and tortured by venomous creatures called hell, nor is there a domain in the sky which we call heaven. Man himself is a god when he is imbued with pious instincts and he, too, is a demon when overtaken by impious impulses. Krishn's own kinsmen such as Kans, Shishupal, and Banasur were cursed with demoniacal temperament. Gods, men, and sub-humans constitute the three metaphorical worlds. Krishn insists that the Self, carrying with himself the mind and the five senses, assumes new bodies according to the sanskar earned over unnumerable lives.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥१४॥

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥१५॥

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥१६॥

Gods, embodiments of virtue, whom we call immortal, are also subject to death. And there can be no greater loss than the destruction of piety in this mortal world. What is the use of this godlike body if it works for the destruction of the earned righteousness? All the worlds, from the highest to the lowest, are worlds of suffering. Man alone can shape the action by which he achieves the supreme goal, after which there is no recurrence of birth and death. By the ordained action man can become God and even achieve the position of Brahma himself, the first deity of the sacred Hindu Trinity to whom is entrusted the task of creation. And yet he will not be spared from rebirth until, with restraint and dissolution of the mind, he perceives God and merges into him. The Upanishads reveal the same truth. According to the Kathopanishad, the mortal human is capable of being immortal and within this physical body and in this world itself, he can achieve direct perception of the Supreme Spirit by the destruction of all attachments of the heart.

Is Brahma, creator of the world, himself mortal? Krishn said in Chapter 3 that the mind of Prajapati Brahma is a mere tool and God is manifested through him. It is such great souls who have devised yagya. But it is now revealed that even one who attains to the status of Brahma has to be reborn. After all, what does Krishn really intend to say?

In truth, the realized sages, through whom God is manifested, do not have a Brahma-like mind, but they are addressed as Brahma because they teach and do good. They are not Brahma in themselves, for their mind is at last dissolved, but their mind existing in the course of worship before that stage is Brahma. This mind, constituted of ego, intellect, thought, and feeling, is truly vast and Brahma-like.

But the mind of an ordinary man is not Brahma. Brahma begins to be shaped from the moment when the mind commences approaching the worshipped God. Scholars of great erudition have ascribed four stages to this process which have been pointed out

in Chapter 3.² If we recall them, they are brahmavitt, brahmavidwar, brahmavidwariyan, and brahmavidwarisht. Brahmavitt is the mind that is embellished with knowledge of the Supreme Spirit (brahmavidya. Brahmavidwar is that which has achieved excellence in such knowledge. Rather than just achieving distinction in the knowledge of God, brahmavidwariyan is the mind that has turned into a medium for the dissemination of the knowledge and for guidance to others who wish to go along the way. Brahmavidwarisht represents that last stage in which it is flooded with consciousness of the adored God. The mind has its existence until this stage, because the God who irradiates it is yet removed from it. The worshipper is yet within the bounds of nature and, although in an elevated state, he is still subject to recurrent birth and death.

When the mind (Brahma) dwells in celestial radiance, the whole being and its current of thought are awake and alert. But they are unconscious and inert when they are beset by spiritual ignorance. This is what has been described as brightness and darkness or day and night. These are but figurative renderings of different states of mind.

Even in this superior, Brahma-like state, blessed with knowledge of God and overflowing with his radiance, the relentless succession of the day of spiritual knowledge (which unites the Self with the Supreme Spirit) and the night of ignorance, of light and darkness, persists. Even at this stage maya is still in command. When there is resplendence of knowledge, insensate beings come to consciousness and they begin to see the supreme goal. On the other hand, when the mind is submerged in darkness, beings are in state of nescience (the lack of knowledge). The mind cannot then ascertain its position and the progress towards God comes to a standstill. These states of knowledge and ignorance are Brahma's day and night. In the light of day the numerous impulses of mind are lit up by God's effulgence, whereas in the night of ignorance the same impulses are buried under the impenetrable gloom of insensibility.

2. See the exposition of tenth verse in Chapter 3.

Realization of the immutable, unmanifest God, who is indestructible and much beyond the unmanifest mind, is effected when the inclinations to both good and evil, to knowledge and ignorance, are perfectly hushed, and when all the currents of will the sensible as well as the insensible that disappear from view in the darkness of night and emerge in the light of day are obliterated.

An accomplished Soul is one who has gone beyond these four stages of the mind. There is no mind within him because it has turned into a mere instrument of God. Yet he appears to have a mind because he instructs others and prompts them with firmness. But, in truth, he is beyond the sway of the mind's operation, because he has now found his place in the ultimate unmanifest reality and won freedom from rebirth. But prior to this, when he is still in possession of his mind, he is Brahma and subject to rebirth. Casting light upon these matters, Krishn says :

17. “Yogi who know the reality of one day of Brahma which is of the duration of a thousand ages (yug) and of one night which is also equal to a thousand ages know the essence of time.”

In the seventeenth verse, day and night are used as symbols of knowledge and ignorance. Brahma comes into being when the mind is endowed with the knowledge of God (brahmavitt), whereas the mind which has achieved the state of brahmavidvarisht marks the crowning point of Brahma. The mind which is possessed of knowledge is Brahma's day. When knowledge acts upon the mind, the yogi makes his way towards God and the innumerable predilections of his mind are suffused with his radiance. On the other hand, when the night of ignorance prevails, the mind and heart are swamped with the contradictions of maya between manifold impulses. This is the furthest limit of light and darkness. Beyond this there is neither ignorance nor knowledge, because the final essence that is God is now directly known. Those yogis who know this essence know the reality of time. They know when

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद् ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥१७॥

the night of ignorance falls and when the day of knowledge dawns, and also the limits of the dominance of time-the point to which it can pursue us.

The sages of yore described the inner realm as thought or sometimes as intellect. In the course of time, functions of the mind were divided into four categories which came to be known as mind, intellect, thought and ego, although impulses are in fact endless. It is within the mind that there are the night of ignorance and also the day of knowledge. These are the days and nights of Brahma. In the mortal world, which is a form of darkness, all beings lie in a state of insensibility. Roaming about amidst nature, their mind fails to perceive the radiant God. But they who practise yog have woken up from the slumber of insensibility and begun to make their way towards God.

According to Goswami Tulsidas in the Ram Charit Manas, his version of the Ramayana, even the mind possessed of knowledge is degraded to the state of ignorance by evil association. But it is re-imbued with light by virtuous company. This alternation of spiritual ascendancy and decline continues till the moment of attainment. After realization of the ultimate goal, however, there are no Brahma, no mind, no night, and no day. Brahma's day and night are just metaphors. There is neither a night nor a day of a thousand years, nor even a Brahma with four faces. The brahmavitt, brahmvidwar, brahmvidwariyan, and brahmvidwarisht, four successive stages of mind, are his four faces, and the four main divisions of the mind are his four ages (yug). Day and night abide in the tendencies and operations of the mind. Men who know this secret understand the mystery of time- how far it pursues us and who can transcend it. Krishn then goes on to explain the deeds that belong to day as also those that belong to night : what is done in the state of knowledge and that which is done in the obscurity of ignorance.

- 18. "All manifest beings are born from the subtle body of Brahma at the outset of his day and are also dissolved in the same unmanifest body at the fall of his night."**

अव्यक्तादव्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥१८॥

With the dawning of a day of Brahma's, that is, with the inception of knowledge, all beings come awake in their unmanifest mind, and it is within the same subtle, unmanifest mind that they lapse into unconsciousness. They are unable to see the Supreme Spirit, but they have an existence. The mind, unmanifest and invisible, is the medium of both consciousness and unconsciousness, of both knowledge and nescience (the lack of knowledge).

19. "The beings who thus wake up into consciousness are compelled by nature to relapse into unconsciousness with the coming of night and they are then, O Parth, reborn with the advent of day."

As long as the mind persists, the succession of knowledge and ignorance goes on. So long as this continues, the seeker is only a worshipper rather than an accomplished sage.

20. "But beyond the unmanifest Brahma there is the eternal, unmanifest God who is not destroyed even after the destruction of all beings."

On the one hand, the mind that is Brahma is imperceptible. It cannot be known by the senses. On the other, there is the eternal, unmanifest Supreme Spirit who is not destroyed even with the destruction of physical beings, or of the invisible Brahma (mind) which gains consciousness with the arising of knowledge and sinks into unconsciousness with the setting of knowledge into the darkness of ignorance. God exists even after the destruction of inclinations of the mind which wake up in the light of day and fall back into insensibility in the darkness of night. These upward and downward motions of the mind cease only after the attainment of God who is the ultimate abode. With the realization of the Supreme Spirit, the mind is coloured by him and becomes what he is. This is the point when the mind is annihilated and in its place only the eternal, unmanifest God remains.

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥१९॥
परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥२०॥

- 21. “The unmanifest and imperishable God who is said to be salvation and after realizing whom one does not come back to the world, is my ultimate abode.”**

That eternal unmanifest state is immortal and that is called enlightenment (or attainment) of the supreme goal ! Kirshn says, “This is my ultimate abode, after attaining which one does not return to mortal life and is not reborn.” So now he tells Arjun this way of achieving that eternal, unmanifest state.

- 22. “And, O Parth that God in whom all beings exist and who permeates the whole world is realized by steady devotion.”**

Steady, unswerving devotion means the act of remembering none else except God so as to be one with him. Krishn then reveals when even men of such devotion are within the limits of rebirth and when they are beyond it.

- 23. “And, O the best of Bharat, I shall now enlighten you on the ways by which, after giving up their bodies, yogi arrive at the state of birth-lessness as well as of rebirth.”**

Freedom from rebirth, as we are about to see, is achieved by those who dwell in the light of knowledge.

- 24. “They who depart from the body in the presence of bright flames, daylight, the sun, the waxing moon of the bright half of a month, and the dazzlingly clear sky of the time when the sun moves northwards, attain to God.”**

Fire is a symbol of God’s radiance as day is of knowledge. The bright half of lunar month stands for purity. The six virtues of discrimination, renunciation, restraint, tranquillity, courage and

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्ध्रदाम परमं मम ॥२१॥
पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तः स्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥२२॥
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥२३॥
अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥२४॥

intellect are the six months of the ascendant motion of the sun. The state of upward motion is the progress of the sun to the north of the equator. Enlightened by knowledge of the reality which is quite beyond nature, sages attain to God and they are then not reborn. But what happens to the worshippers who do not realize this state of divine magnificence in spite of their devotion?

25. “Dying during prevalence of the darkness of a gloomy night, the dark half of a lunar month, and the six months of the downward course of the sun, the yogi who desires fruits of his action attains to the dim light of the moon³ and is reborn after enjoying his rewards in heaven.’

That Soul is yet far removed from God who departs from the body when the sacred fire of his yajna is smothered by smoke, when the night of ignorance prevails, when the moon is waning in the dark half of a month, when gloom prevails on all sides and the outward looking mind is infested with the six vices of passion, wrath greed, delusion, vanity and malice and he is reborn. Does it mean, however, that along with his body the worship, too, of this seeker is destroyed?

26. “The way of brightness (that leads to God) and the way of darkness that takes one to the afterworld (the world of Manes to which departed ancestors have gone) are the two eternal ways in the world. One who takes the first achieves birthlessness, whereas the treader on the second is subject to repeated birth and death.”

Both the ways, of light and darkness, of knowledge and ignorance, have been forever. But the merits of worship are never destroyed. The one who dies in the state of knowledge and brightness achieves ultimate salvation, but the one who departs

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥२५॥

शुक्ल कृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।

एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥२६॥

3. The sage Pippalad says in the Upanishad Prashn : God, the Lord of beings, made *Pran*, the primal energy (male principle) and *Rayi* (female principal), the giver of form. *Pran*, the primal energy, the sun; and *Rayi*, the form giving substance, is the Moon.

from the body in the state of ignorance and obscurity has to come back and undergo yet another birth. And this succession of one birth after another goes on until there is perfect light; until that moment the seeker has to carry on his worship. The problem is fully resolved at this point and Krishn then dwells upon the means which are essential for the attainment of final liberation.

27. “You should always rest upon yog, O Parth, for the yogi who knows the reality of the two ways is never deceived.”

Knowing the two ways well, the yogi is aware that his act of worship will not be destroyed even if he is reborn because of dying in ignorance. Both the ways have also been forever. So Arjun should at all time practise yog and devote himself to worship, for-

28. “Knowing this secret, the yogi transcends the rewards of Vedic study, sacrificial rites, penance, and charity and so achieves salvation.”

By his contemplation of God, the fruit of yagya, the yogi who comes to know the identical Supreme Spirit by direct perception rather than by just belief or assumption goes beyond the promised rewards, and is liberated for ever. This direct perception of the Supreme Spirit is named Ved that which has been directly revealed by God himself. So when that unmanifest essence itself is known, there remains nothing more to know. After this even the need for the Ved is therefore done away with, for the knower is now no different from him who had revealed it to their seer-composers. Yagya or the appointed task was a necessity earlier, but once the reality is known there remains nothing else to pray for. To subject the senses along with the mind to austerities is penance, but even that is unnecessary now. A total self surrender, in thought, speech and action, is charity. And the auspicious fruit of all these is the attainment of God. And all these are now unnecessary because the desired goal is no longer away from the seeker. The yogi who

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥२७॥

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसुचैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।

अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥२८॥

has realized God transcends the rewards of all these virtuous acts-yagya, penance, charity and others and achieves absolution.



Five main points have been elaborated in the chapter. At the beginning, made curious by problem hinted at by Krishn at the end of Chapter 7, Arjun puts forward seven questions. He wishes to know the nature of the Supreme Spirit, adhyatm, the perfect action, adhidaiv, adhibhoot and adhiyagya, and how he (Krishn) may be so known at the end that he is never forgotten thereafter. Replying to these questions, Krishn tells him that the one who is imperishable is God. The devotion that secures realization of God is adhyatm; it is the knowledge that brings man under the domination of Self by freeing him from the supremacy of maya. Shedding away the innate properties of nature which produce good or evil impressions (sanskar)- the annihilation or destruction of these properties is the perfection of action. There is no need of any further action after this. So true action is something that destroys the very source of the merits that are called sanskar.

Transient, perishable desires are adhibhoot. In other words, that which is destroyed is the medium for the generation of all beings. The Supreme Spirit is adhidaiv and in him is dissolved the treasure of divinity. Krishn is himself adhiyagya in the body for all the sacrifices of yagya are made to him. He is the agent who effects the sacrifices. And he is also the one in whom the sacrifices are all dissolved. Adhiyagya is someone who lives within the body, not out of it. Arjun's last question is how he (Krishn) is known at the end. Krishn tells him that man who contemplate him alone and nothing else, and who depart from the body thinking of him, know him by direct perception and become one with what they have perceived. Since they have always contemplated him, at the end also they attain to what they have borne in mind at all time. It is not that this attainment comes after physical death. If perfection were to come only after physical death, Krishn would not be immaculate. Were it so, he would not have the knowledge that is gained from the practice of spiritual discipline through a number of lives. The real end comes when even the wholly restrained mind ceases to be, after which the process of assuming new bodies is discontinued

forever. The worshipper then merges into the Supreme Spirit and is not reborn thereafter.

According to Krishn remembrance is the way to this realization. So Arjun should constantly keep him in mind and wage war. How is it possible to do both at once ? Is it that Krishn is referring thus to the usual practice of fighting and at the same time uttering the name of some deity? Remembrance, as he defines it, is incessant contemplation of him without a thought of anything else. When remembrance is so refined and intent, who can fight? What war is possible with such intense absorption of the mind on a single object. In fact, the real form of the “war” that is the theme of the Geeta emerges only when a worshipper is immersed in such total and unswerving contemplation. This is also the state in which the obstructive properties of maya are clearly visible. Passion, anger, attachment and aversion are our most terrible enemies. They obstruct the worshipper’s memory and to overcome them is to fight a war. The supreme goal is reached only after the destruction of these enemies.

So Arjun is counselled to recite the sacred syllable of OM but contemplate the form of Krishn, and adept in yog. Reciting the deity’s name while at the same time visualizing the known form of a noble mentor, an accomplished or enlightened teacher, is the key to successful worship.

In the chapter Krishn has also taken up the problem of rebirth and said that the whole world, from Brahma himself to the lowest of creatures, repeats itself. But even after all of them are destroyed, his (Krishn’s) sublime, unmanifest being and the steady devotion to him never come to an end.

A man who is initiated into yog is provided with two ways by which he may proceed. On the first of these two paths, blessed with the radiance of perfect knowledge, possessed of six fold excellence (verse 24), in a state of upward motion, and absolutely free from any blemish, the worshipper is assured of redemption. But if there is even the least imperfection about him or any touch of the gloom that prevails in the dark fortnight of a month, and he departs from the body in such a state, he has to undergo yet another birth. However, since he has been a worshipper, instead of being

for ever enmeshed in the vicious web of birth and death, after his new birth he sets himself anew to the task of completing his unaccomplished worship.

Thus, following the path of action in his next birth, the imperfect worshipper too can reach the supreme goal. Krishn has also said earlier that even a partial accomplishment of worship does no cease until it has brought about liberation from the great fear of life and death. Both the ways are eternal and indestructible. The man who understands this is ever steady and in repose. So Arjun is advised to be a yogi, for yogi transcend even the sacred rewards of study of the Ved, penance, yagya and charity and so attain to ultimate liberation.

At several points in the chapter there is a reference to the supreme goal as the attainment of God, who is represented as unmanifest, imperishable and eternal.

**Thus concludes the Eighth Chapter, in the Upanishad of the
Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta, on the Knowledge of the
Supreme Spirit, the Discipline of Yog, and the Dialogue
between Krishn and Arjun, entitled.
“Akshar Brahm Yog”, or “Yog with the Imperishable God.”**

**Thus concludes Swami Adgadanand’s exposition
of the Eighth Chapter of the Shreemad Bhagwad Geeta in
“Yatharth Geeta”**

HARI OM TAT SAT